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W. R. H
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An

Inaugural Dissertation

On

Bilious Remittent Fever

By

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Bilious Remittent Fever

A remittent fever is one which consists of re-
-peated paroxysms without any entire inter-
-mission between them; there is generally
some abatement of the symptoms once in
twenty-four hours, followed by another parox-
-ysm which runs the same course as the former.
It belongs to the order febres class pynexia of
Cullen. It differs but little from the intermit-
-tent. The same causes applied to different
persons may produce remittent in one, and
intermittent in another; or applied to the same
person at different times and under differ-
-ent circumstances, may produce at one time
an intermittent, and at another a remittent
fever.
The remote causes of this disease are, marsh

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miasmata or exhalations arising from low moist situations abounding with vegetable matter in a state of putrefaction.
The exciting causes are, exposure to cold, sudden vicipitudes in the weather, putting on damp clothing, intemperance in eating, and drinking, being too much exposed to the sun, fatigue, low and precarious diet, exposure to night air, excessive evacuations &c.

An attack of this disease generally comes on with a sense of languor and debility, yawning, sighing, great anxiety, alternate fits of heat and cold, with pain in the head and back. The pulse is quick and frequent, the skin hot and dry, the tongue parched and covered with a white or yellow fur, great thirst, nausea and sometimes vomiting of a bilious matter, the bowels irregular, more generally costive than otherwise.

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After these symptoms have continued for some time, there is generally some remission with a gentle moisture partially diffused over the body; but in a short time another paroxysm comes on to run the same course.

This may be considered as a mild form of the disease; in some cases there is a great determination to the head with a violent headach and delirium, frequent flushings of the face, and a remission does not take place until the sixth or seventh day; or is so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, each succeeding paroxysm being more violent than the preceeding, until the patient is carried off.

This disease generally runs its course in five or six days in warm, but in cold climates it is frequently protracted until the twelfth or fourteenth day.

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In the treatment of this disease if the patient is young and plethoric, the pulse full and hard, with much determination to the head, we should always bleed. As there is generally nause and distress about the stomach, an emetic of tartar emetic or ipecacuanha should next be given, of these the former I think preferable. After the operation of the emetic the alimentary canal should be thoroughly evacuated by purgatives, of which calomel is to be preferred; it is sometimes very advantageously combined with jalap or rhubarb. It is sometimes necessary to repeat this medicine more than once, after which we exhibit mild laxatives, as the neutral salts, Oleum ricini &c.

The system being sufficiently reduced by the above remedies we should have recourse to the use of mild diaphoretics. Of these by far the best are the preparations of antimony.

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Emetic tartar given every two hours in doses of from a tenth to a sixth of a grain has a very fine effect in producing gentle diaphoresis. It is sometimes combined with six or eight grains of nitrate of potash. The pulvis antimonialis in doses of three or four grains every two hours, is also very good. The spiritus mindereri or acetate of ammonia and the saline mixture are both highly recommended as diaphoretics, in doses of a table spoonful every hour. The patient should drink plentifully of some warm liquor.

In cases of violent headach and delirium cold water or ice should be applied to the head. If these afford no relief we should try leeches or cups to the temples, remove the hair and apply a large blister to the head. If the skin be hot and dry we give warm affusions or sponging the body with

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cold water, or cold water and vinegar where there is debility, very beneficial.
In some cases there is great distress about the stomach, with a vomiting of bilious matter. This may frequently be relieved by an emetic; or, if the vomiting proceed from irritability alone, the saline mixture, mint tea, or a mixture of equal quantities of lime water and milk given in doses of a table spoon-ful every twenty or thirty minutes. A very good remedy in this case is strong coffee without cream or sugar. We sometimes give half a grain of sugar of lead every hour. The infusion of serpentaria is also a useful remedy. The patient should use as little drink as possible when the stomach is in this state.
We sometimes derive great benefit from an old opium pill, it frequently quiets the stomach when a recent one cannot be retained. A suppository of four or five grains of opium has

afforded relief in this case. A very good prescription for bilious vomiting, is the following

℞ Carb: Potas: ℥ I
Gum: Arab: ℥ I
Ol: Ment: gtts X
Tinc: Opii. gtts XXX
Aqua Font: ℥ VIII

Mix them, and give a table spoon ful every hour or two.

Should these remedies prove ineffectual, we should apply cloths, wrung out of an infusion of chamomile flowers, or hot brandy in which cloves have been steeped, to the stomach. Sinapisms may likewise be applied, or what is still better a large blister applied immediately over the stomach.

Blisters applied between the shoulders or to the extremities, and sinapisms to the soles of the feet are very beneficial in the latter stages of this disease when there is great debility, and

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the pulse low and fluttering.
The alimentary canal being well evacuated by emetics, and purgatives, we should commence with the peruvian bark: it should be given during the remission, in doses as large and frequently repeated as the stomach will bear. I think that the best preparation is the powder, if this create nausea, we may use the infusion or decoction. If it purge we add ten drops of tinc. opii: to each dose. Some advantage may be derived from the addition of fifteen or twenty drops of acidum sulphuricum dilutum to each dose. The bark should be continued for several days after all the symptoms of the disease are removed to prevent a relapse. A favorite remedy with some physicians is a solution of arsenic prepared under the name of liquor arsenicalis, it is given in doses of four or five drops every four hours, and is said to remove the crust from the

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tongue, produce a sediment in the urine, and increase the firmness of the pulse. The patients diet should be of the light-est and most digestible kind, as sago, Tapi-ocha, boiled rice &c.

Examinations of those who have died of this disease, show congestions of blood in the liver and spleen, inflammation of the alimentary canal, and a distended state of of the venous vessels of the brain.